

Message Text

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70

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 SCCT-01 AID-05 CCO-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NIC-01 NSC-05 SP-02 OC-05 OPR-02 PA-01

USSS-00 PRS-01 SCA-01 A-01 OMB-01 SS-15 SY-05 SCS-03

FBO-02 /078 W

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O R 132141Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2072

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 1402

S/S-O PLEASE INFORM EUR/IB ASAP

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: RISING TENSION

1. STARTING LATE AFTERNOON MARCH 13 DISPARATE RUMORS BEGAN OF TROOP MOVEMENTS, BOMB THREATS AGAINST RADIO STATIONS, PRESENCE OF U.S. AIRCRAFT AND NAVAL UNITS IN AND OVER PORTUGUESE WATERS. RELIABLE SOURCES TELL US THAT SOMETHING IS IN THE AIR.

2. MILITARY SPOKESMAN COMMENTED ON RADIO IN EARLY EVENING DURING BREAK IN COUNCIL OF STATE MEETING THAT RESIGNATIONS OF CIVILIAN MEMBERS OF COUNCIL HAD BEEN ACCEPTED BY PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES AND THE PRESIDENT WOULD MAKE MAJOR ADDRESS TO NATION TONIGHT AT ABOUT 9:30 P.M. LOCAL. (IT NOW 10:30 AND HE HAS NOT YET SPOKEN.) PRESIDENCY ISSUED STATEMENT AT 8:30 THAT RUMORS OF SPINOLA RETURN AND U.S. SHIPS AND PLANES OFF PORTUGAL UNTRUE.

3. OPORTO CONSULATE REPORTS THAT BEGINNING ABOUT 8:30 P.M. RADIO STATIONS THERE STARTED BROADCASTING BULLETIN FROM LOCAL
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ARMY HEADQUARTERS TO EFFECT THAT THE AFM CONTINUES IN CONTROL

OF NORTH AND THAT POPULACE SHOULD REMAIN CALM. AT 9:00 P.M.
Oporto RADIO BROADCAST SPECIAL BULLETIN TO EFFECT THAT TROOP
MOVEMENTS BEING OBSERVED BY POPULACE REPRESENTED NOTHING ABNORMAL,
THAT THEY WERE NORMAL PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES AS RESULT
MARCH 11 COUP.

4. VARIOUS MILITARY UNITS, WE UNDERSTAND RELIABLY, HAVE
BEEN ON AND OFF ALERT IN LISBON AREA SEVERAL TIMES TODAY AND
TONIGHT. WE HAVE CONFIRMED INFORMATION ON ENLISTED MEN'S
ASSUMPTION OF PARALLEL COMMAND AT AIR BASE 5 (NEAR LEIRIA AND
COAST, WHERE F-86S BASED) AND IN AIR FORCE HEADQUARTERS.
SENIOR OFFICERS IN BOTH COMMANDS ARE MODERATES.

5. COMMENT: HARD TO READ THESE TEA LEAVES. IT POSSIBLE THAT
(A) GOVERNMENT IS ACTING TO ROLL UP THOSE IN MILITARY WHO MAY
HAVE SILENTLY SUPPORTED ABORTIVE MARCH 11 COUP; (B) PRECAUTIONARY
MILITARY MOVEMENTS ARE UNDERWAY IN RESPONSE TO RUMORS. IT
ALSO POSSIBLE THAT ANOTHER ACTION BY REMAINING MODERATE-RIGHT
MILITARY IS IN MAKING.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ellisoob
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LISBON01402
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750088-0863
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750355/aaaabwzt.tel
Line Count: 81
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ellisoob
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 JUN 2003 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <28 OCT 2003 by ellisoob>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RISING TENSION
TAGS: PINT, PO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006